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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted of the residential patterns of a segment of the Tallahassee, Florida, black professional community. The study set out to determine the degree to which black professionals, especially black university personnel, dispersed throughout the city between 1967 and 1976. The results suggest that in the ten year interval, there was a significant dispersal of members of the black professional community into formerly all white neighborhoods. This occurred with a minimum of racial tension. Generally, such dispersal has been accomplished by professional blacks who have arrived in Tallahassee relatively recently. Professional blacks who have arrived in recent years normally first rent apartments in neighborhoods where whites are in the majority. After a short interval, many seek to either rent or purchase single family detached housing. Most who succeed in doing so move onto a block in which they are a racial minority. (Author/APM)

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Residential Integration Among Professional Blacks in Tallahassee, Florida

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To many, equal employment opportunity is the best manner in which to eliminate racial residential segregation in the United States. As blacks attain equality with whites in education and occupational status, accompanied by more equal parity in income, they will be able to afford the move from ghettoes to neighborhoods which are both more affluent and racially balanced.[1] Yet, this move will not be initiated, despite open housing legislation and other Federal governmental policy, if the social climate of the city in which they reside is unfavorable for racial residential integration.

In this paper the geographical distribution of the residences of a segment of the Tallahassee, Florida, black professional community is used to determine the degree in which members have dispersed throughout the city between 1967 and 1977. The results suggest that in the ten year interval, which began when racial attitudes within the city's white community were as rigid as most other cities of the Deep South of comparable size, there has been a significant dispersal of members of the black professional community into formerly all white neighborhoods, and it has succeeded with a minimum of racial tension. Generally, the dispersal has not been accomplished by professional blacks of long residence within the city, but by those who have arrived more recently. Professional blacks who have arrived in recent years normally first rent apartments in neighborhoods where whites are in the majority. After a short interval many seek single family detached housing, either to purchase or rent, and most who do so move onto a block in which they are a racial minority.

Method of Analysis

The black faculty and professional staff of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) as well as that of the Florida State University (FSU) constitute the sample of the black professional community of the city. FAMU is a state institution with a predominantly black student body. FSU, considerably larger than FAMU in enrollment, is also a state university, but with

only a small minority of blacks. All black faculty members of both institutions were used in the sample, as well as all black staff members who had at least one college degree and an occupation which could be classified as professional.[2] In 1967 FSU had neither a full-time black faculty member nor a black who was a member of its professional staff, but by 1977 there were 59 in these two categories. In 1967 FAMU's black faculty and professional staff numbered 323 and in 1977 it had risen to 401.

Place of residence was determined through use of the faculty directories of both institutions, city and phone directories and personnel records. Information concerning length of residence in the city was not available. Consequently, the year of first employment at each university was used as the indicator. Some who were hired by the city's two universities might have been living in Tallahassee at the time they were first employed, but the vast majority came from elsewhere. Another problem of analysis was that frequently both husbands and wives were employed by the universities in professional positions. All data which appear in tables are for individuals, but on the map couples are represented by one symbol.

The Urban Social Environment

Tallahassee is the capital of the state of Florida, as well as the home of two state universities and a junior college. Its primary functions are government and education, and there is little manufacturing. The 1950 Census reported a population of only 27,237, but since then growth has been rapid. By 1960, following the expansion of both its student population and its government functions, the population of the city and its suburbs had reached 48,174, and in 1970 that figure had risen to 71,897. The number of inhabitants in 1977 was estimated at 87,500.[3]

Situated but 20 miles south of the Georgia state line and 400 miles north of Miami, until recently its social environment differed little from cities of comparable size elsewhere in the South. Although the Tallahassee bus boycott, which began in 1956, did not earn the city the world attention of similar boycotts experienced within cities of the neighboring state of Alabama, it nonetheless was both long and bitter.[4] Segregation within the city was so complete that even in the mid 1950s university regulation forbade FSU students from visiting the campus of FAMU unless accompanied by a parent. Civil rights protests, generally initiated by the students of FAMU, continued well into the 1970s.

The decade of the 1970s, however, has been one of rapid social change within Tallahassee. Although informal racial barriers continue to exist, by 1978 blacks had virtually the same access to both goods and services as whites. Furthermore, the state implementation of Federal equal opportunity employment laws has greatly increased the number of blacks in professional positions within the state government and higher education. FSU especially has earned recognition for its adherence to equal opportunity employment regulations, not only as they apply to blacks, but to women as well. The faculty of FAMU also has become more racially integrated, accounting for the slow rate of growth of

the size of the black faculty since 1967 when compared to that of the student body during the same period. The state also has initiated a policy of the equalization of pay between the FAMU faculty and other state controlled higher educational institutions. Traditionally the median faculty salary of FAMU has been lower than that of the faculties of all other state higher educational institutions.

The Black Population

Tallahassee's black community has grown in absolute numbers since 1950, but its share of the total population has steadily declined. In 1950 there were 9,373 blacks living within the city, 34 percent of its population. By 1970 the number had increased to 18,263, but its share of the total population had dropped to 25 percent. Actually, in both the decades of the 1950s and the 1960s, although there was a population increase in the black community, more blacks left the county in which the city is situated than arrived, a situation typical of most counties in the South.[5] Only in the age cohorts in which were found the majority of FAMU students was there significant net immigration of blacks in those two decades.

The presence of FAMU in Tallahassee reflects strongly on the character of the black professional community of the city, as well as its size. Whereas in most southern cities professional employment opportunities for blacks have been confined to careers within their own community, such as medicine, dentistry, the law or primary and secondary education, in Tallahassee the black university has provided employment for many blacks with a professional education. Even in 1950, the first census year in which data are available, the city had a larger percentage of professionals in the black labor force than all but one Florida city with a population of 10,000 or more, and in 1960 and 1970 it was first.[6]

Despite the relative importance of the city's black professional population when compared to other Florida cities, in 1970 the U.S. Census of Housing reported that residential segregation was nearly complete. As elsewhere in the South, most blacks were confined to areas of the city which had been set aside for them. In that year 83 percent of all blacks lived on blocks which had fewer than 5 percent whites. Only 2 percent of the blacks lived on blocks in which they were in the minority.

Residential Patterns of the Black Professional Community

In 1967, a year in which all black university faculty and professional staff living in Tallahassee and its vicinity were employed by FAMU, their homes overwhelmingly were situated within the black residential enclave that surrounds that university's campus (Table 1 and Map 1). Even within this broad area there was intense concentration, 46 percent of all the FAMU professional personnel lived in two small sections comprising 28 city blocks contiguous to

Table 1

Residential Distribution of Black University Faculty and Professional Staff Living in Tallahassee, Florida. 1967 and 1977

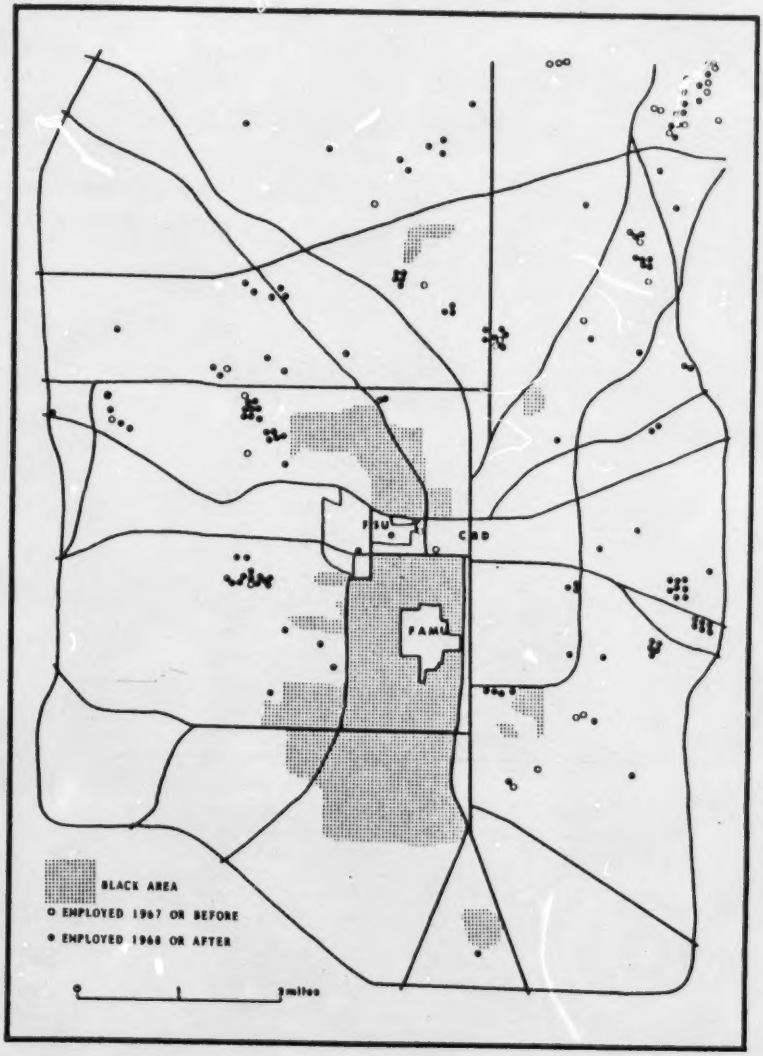
	1967		1977	
FAMU Black Enclave	270	84%	220	47%
Other Black Enclaves	24	7%	18	5%
White Areas	13	4%	194	42%
Rural Areas	12	4%	21	4%
Unknown	4	1%	7	2%
Total	323	100%	460	100%

the eastern edge of the campus. Here, and in a third area farther to the south of the campus, were situated the majority of the few blocks within the city's black section in which average house values in 1970 attained or exceeded the median house value for the metropolitan area.

The concentration of the black faculty and professional staff of FAMU in sections of the city close to the campus cannot be attributed to their desire to live close to work. By comparison, the residences of the faculty and professional staff of FSU in 1967 were widely dispersed throughout the city.[7] The explanation is found in the policy of legal and *de facto* residential segregation, rigidly enforced until the early 1970s. Those few professional blacks employed at FAMU in 1967 with homes on blocks in which they were a racial minority generally were not living in truly integrated neighborhoods. Five of the 13 dwelt on the northern edge of the city in a lightly populated neighborhood along a street laid out in such a manner as to minimize their contact with white neighbors.

The large increase since 1967 in the number of black FAMU and FSU professional personnel living in areas of the city in which they are in the minority is due to the arrival of many from elsewhere during a period when legal and social obstacles to integrated housing had begun to crumble. Actually few (17 percent) among the 189 blacks included in the 1967 sample who also figured in that for 1977 had left their black neighborhoods to live either in predominantly white sections of the city or in a rural area within the county.

The nature of Tallahassee's housing market partially explains why few black professionals who started work at FAMU before 1968 have moved to white neighborhoods. Many among the group built or purchased medium-priced homes in the FAMU black enclave during the late 1960s and early 1970s, and have developed a strong attachment to them. Frequently, those who desire to sell in order to purchase a house in a white neighborhood experience difficulty in finding a buyer at what they consider to be a fair price. Blacks who arrived in the city since 1973, and who can afford to purchase middle- to high-priced homes, commonly limit their search to white neighborhoods. Since whites do not purchase homes in black middle class neighborhoods, housing



prices within them are often depressed. Frequently homes for sale within these neighborhoods are subject to speculative purchases by people who turn them into rentals, which may lower the quality of the neighborhoods and, as a consequence, property values.

There is a sharp difference between the residential patterns of these black professional university personnel of Tallahassee who were hired in 1967 or before and those who were hired in 1968 or later (Table 2). Black professional university personnel employed before 1968 generally continue to live in the

FAMU black enclave. If they have chosen to move into a white neighborhood it generally is into a house, not an apartment. Those who arrived in 1968 or later commonly have chosen first to live in one of the numerous garden apartments in white neighborhoods.[8] The more recently a professional black employed by a university has arrived in Tallahassee, the more likely that person chooses a white neighborhood. Between 1973 and 1977, among those in this group who arrived in the city, 65 percent chose a white neighborhood, and 59 percent of those who did move onto blocks on which they were a racial minority rented apartments. Living in the county's rural areas has been equally unattractive to long-time black professional university employees of the city, and those who have arrived more recently.

Table 2

Residential Distribution of Black University Faculty and Professional Staff Living in Tallahassee, Florida by Year of First University Employment. 1977

	1967 or before		1968 or after	
FAMU Black Enclave	149	69%	71	29%
Other Black Enclaves	8	4%	10	4%
White Areas (total)	46	21%	148	61%
House	38	83%[1]	74	50%[1]
Apartment	8	17%[1]	74	50%[1]
Rural Areas	12	6%	9	4%
Unknown	1	*	6	2%
Total	216	100%	244	100%

*less than .5%

[1]Percentage living in white area

The movement of black professional university personnel into white areas might not have been so rapid since 1967 had there been construction of suitable apartments for them in black neighborhoods. Since that year, although a few small apartment buildings were built in black areas of the city which primarily attracted FAMU students, the large garden apartments with numerous amenities have all been constructed in white neighborhoods. Consequently, regardless of race, university professional personnel upon first employment in Tallahassee commonly find apartments in these complexes for a short period and then initiate a search for a house. Almost invariably blacks who do so ultimately find a home in a white neighborhood, there being only three known cases where a black moved from an apartment within a white section of the city to a home in a black neighborhood.

The blacks who in 1977 resided in homes within white neighborhoods, whether they were employed by FSU or FAMU, have selected them in areas which have been equally popular among their recently arrived white col-

leagues. They are generally situated in those parts of the city in which there has been recent planned urban development and where there is a rapid turnover in houses. Within these areas, as well as in all other white sections of the city where black professionals have settled, their arrival has virtually been accepted without incident by the whites among whom they have settled. There have been no panic sales, such as those associated with "block busting" in northern cities, nor have there been any racial problems of the type which would receive notoriety in the newspaper.

Two housing developments in particular have been especially attractive to black professionals in search of housing within white neighborhoods. Both are situated in the northeastern section of the city. One includes a country club whose membership is open to all who live within its limits. Houses within this large development in 1978 ranged in price from $45,000 to $135,000. No blacks were living there in 1970, the year in which the local newspaper ran a critical editorial concerning the failure of its country club to racially integrate.[9]

Conclusion

It might be argued that an examination of the residential integration of professional blacks in Tallahassee, Florida, has limited utility in an understanding of urban racial integration elsewhere in the United States. It is true that in many respects the racial situation of Tallahassee is unique, not only in Florida but the nation. The city has a black university as well as a largely white university with a serious commitment toward equal opportunity employment. It also is the home of a huge state civil service which, consonant with the fast growth of the state's population, has been rapidly expanding. Committed to equal opportunity employment, it also is the source of much professional employment among blacks. The recentness of arrival of so large a percentage of the city's population also appears to have contributed to tranquil residential integration, particularly among those who live in new white middle class neighborhoods. It would appear that in these neighborhoods, regardless of whether the white occupants come from the North or the South, they are willing to accept black professionals with equanimity, if not always with enthusiasm.

Although one cannot ignore the difficulties of duplicating elsewhere the access to professional employment by educated blacks which is experienced in Tallahassee, the comparative ease by which this admittedly small group has become residentially integrated does offer some reason for optimism among those committed to the elimination of housing segregation by race.

Footnotes

[1]Phoebe H. Cottington, "Black Income and Metropolitan Residential Dispersion," *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, Vol. 10 (1975), pp. 273–295.

[2]Professional staff was defined through use of Florida State University System Board of Regents classifications.

[3]Estimates provided by the Leon County Planning Commission.

[4]Charles U. Smith and Lewis M. Killian, *The Tallahassee Bus Protest*, Anti Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, New York, 1958.

[5]Since 1950 Tallahassee's black population has increased relative to the total for the county. In that year it was 46 percent, but by 1970 it had risen to 70 percent.

[6]The 1970 census enumerated 999 blacks living in Tallahassee who were classified as being professional, technical or kindred workers. This group included 23 physicians and dentists, 61 health workers, 419 elementary and secondary school teachers, 27 technicians, and 469 "other" professional workers. The latter sub-category included most of the black professional personnel of the city's two state universities.

[7]Morton Winsberg, "Where Do the Faculty Live?" *Research in Review*, Vol. 3.

[8]No difference was found in the pattern of settlement of the black professional personnel of FSU and those who had been hired by FAMU since 1967.

[9]*Tallahassee Democrat*, March 15, 1970.